

FOCUS ON THE FIRST

MONTHLY CONSTITUENT NEWSLETTER

COUNCILMAN CHRIS FORD—1ST COUNCIL DISTRICT
LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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LYRIC THEATRE TO HOST LOCAL STUDENTS AT BLACK HISTORY CONVOCATION



Original Lyric Theatre, 1948

In celebration of Black History Month, the Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center will host its 2nd annual Black History Convocation on Wednesday, February 19th at 10:00 AM. The keynote speaker is the Honorable Andrea James, former Lexington 1st District Council Member, and the first African-American woman elected to serve on Urban County Council.

The Convocation is designed and geared to an audience of Lexington youth. 5th grade students from Ashland, Booker T. Washington, Harrison and William Wells Brown Elementary Schools, as well as 6th graders from Lexington Traditional Magnet School (LTMS), Carter G. Woodson Academy and Sayre School have been invited to participate. In addition to Councilwoman James, remarks will be brought by Lexington Mayor Jim Gray and Mr. Hasan Davis, Commissioner of Kentucky's Department for Juvenile Justice.

I am delighted to support the Lyric, in its outreach to our youth. The Lyric's history is worth continually sharing with future generations. This event is free and open to the public as seats remain available.

STAKEHOLDERS STAND WITH BUILD FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

On the evening of January 23rd, I attended a community meeting convened by a coalition of area churches called BUILD (Building a United Interfaith Lexington through Direct Action). Over 100 folks joined me in braving the elements of blistering cold weather & supporting this assembly of concerned Lexington citizens. BUILD has been a leading force in advocacy of the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund in Lexington since at least early 2008.

Over the years, I've attended many meetings. But this January 23rd meeting was different. On this evening, nearly a dozen community leaders (many highly recognizable & incumbents of significant civic, spiritual & professional responsibility in Lexington) stood to publicly attest their support for BUILD & its' advocacy for this affordable housing issue.

(Continued on Page 3)



Chris Ford
Councilman, 1st District

FEBRUARY CALENDAR:

- 6—Commerce Lexington Annual Dinner (Lexington Center) 5:30pm
- 17—*President's Day* (LFUCG Closed)
- 19—Black History Convocation (Lyric Theatre) 10:00am
- 23—Lift Every Voice Concert (House of God, 866 Georgetown St.) 5:00pm
- 25—1st District Neighborhood Leaders Quarterly Meeting (Coolavin Park Shelter) 6:00pm

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

LYRIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	2
HRC & POLICE TEAM UP	2
SYEP NOW HIRING	2
IMMAG / LEGACY TRAIL UPDATE	3
YOUTH ORCHESTRA	3
NEWS & NOTES	4
E-BUS RETURNS	4

LYRIC THEATRE OFFICIALLY PROMOTES NEW DIRECTOR



The *Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center* Board of Directors recently announced the appointment of *Rasheedah El-Amin* as its new Executive Director. Ms. El-Amin has served as Acting Director since January 2013. She joined the *Lyric* staff in September 2011 as the Cultural Arts Coordinator.

"It is a tremendous privilege to be a part of the redevelopment of such a historic landmark", says Ms. El-Amin, in speaking of the Lyric Theatre. "I am thankful for this opportunity & look forward to guiding the *Lyric's* continued growth", El-Amin added.

A Lexington native, Ms. El-Amin holds a Bachelor's of Fine Arts degree from the University of Kentucky. From 2007 – 2011, she served the Headley – Whitney Museum as its Membership & Administrative Services Coordinator.

The promotion of Ms. El-Amin as Executive Director culminates a year of positive growth for the Lyric Theatre. Today's *Lyric* is more financially stable, has greater broad-based utilization & a healthier connectivity with the community. "As our Acting Director, Rasheedah has done a wonderful job of taking us to new heights", says Abdul Muhammad, Lyric Theatre Board Chairman.

In the role of Executive Director, El-Amin is charged with the day-to-day operation of the recently renovated 540-seat theatre. The adjoining Cultural Arts Center houses the DeWeese Street Community Room, an art gallery and museum space. A staff of two (2) full-time and one (1) part-time employee will report to El-Amin. She will continually be responsible for the cultivation of a local volunteer base and community partnerships.

Indeed, I believe brighter and more promising days are ahead for the Lyric. Rasheedah will do a great job!



Rasheedah El-Amin,
Executive Director

OPENING LINES OF COMMUNICATION— HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION & LEXINGTON LAW ENFORCEMENT

In an effort to open the door to productive communication between the community and law enforcement in Lexington, the Lexington—Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission & the Lexington Police Department are hosting an open discussion and seminar/training. The events will take place over the course of two days, February 11th and 12th.

On February 11th there is a community forum with a panel discussion. Panelist include Lexington Police Chief Ronnie Bastin and representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice. The forum will take place from 5:30—8:00 pm at the Phoenix Building located at 101 E. Vine Street.

On February 12th there is a racial profile seminar and training with Walter Atkinson, Senior Conciliation Specialist—Community Relations Service, U.S. Department of Justice. The seminar/training, also free, will take place from 9:30 am—3:30 pm at the Downtown Central Library, where lunch will be provided.

For more information and/or to RSVP for the seminar, email: agudino@lfuchrc.org or call (859) 252-4931.



SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Division of Youth Services' Summer Youth Employment Program is now hiring! This program provides the opportunity for 225 youths to have paid employment during the summer months.

- Must be between 14—17 years old
- Employment is for six (6) weeks during the summer
- Income guidelines apply
- Must attend required workshops & orientations

Apply online at www.lexingtonky.gov: under Lexington Now, Job Openings for the position of "Summer Youth Worker."

Deadline is 4:00 pm, February 28, 2014.



ISAAC MURPHY MEMORIAL ART GARDEN & LEGACY TRAIL UPDATE



A Community Stakeholder meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 19th at the Plantory, 560 East Third Street. The meeting will begin at 11:30 AM, and is being organized by LFUCG Engineer / Project Manager Keith Lovan, with support from the Bluegrass Community Foundation.

There is good news to share in regards to IMMAG (Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden): After prolonged bureaucratic rangling with administrative red tape, IMMAG is completely funded & the architectural designs are complete! Unfortunately, grants management can be cumbersome & time consuming. But the investment of these federal & state dollars in the IMMAG project is a big win for Lexington!

Currently, the Division of Engineering is preparing for construction bids to advertised, with plans to break ground in late spring / early summer.

The construction schedule is slated for 90 days to complete.

Located at the intersection E. Third, Midland Avenue & Winchester Road, IMMAG is significant not only because of the historical magnitude of its name-sake, but because it will also serve as the East End trailhead of the Legacy Trail.

Turning attention to Legacy, it's now time to re-initiate planning efforts (in earnest) for extending the trail from the North Lexington YMCA trailhead at West Loudon Avenue, through downtown neighborhoods and into the East End, at IMMAG. Pending analysis and decisions on the proposed alignment along either 3rd, 4th or 5th Streets deserves & requires input from community stakeholders. Please stay tuned for continuous updates, or join us on Feb 19th.



A NEW TUNE FOR N. LIME CENTRAL KENTUCKY YOUTH ORCHESTRA



On March 4th Central Kentucky Youth Orchestras NoLi MusicWorks is having a concert at the Lyric Theatre, in conjunction with the students and faculty of MYCincinnati.

The North Limestone MusicWorks program offers intensive study on string instruments and musicianship training for approximately 30 second and third graders from Arlington Elementary. As long as the students show true commitment to learning, they receive 12 hours of intensive music instruction weekly at no cost.

Similarly, MYCincinnati (Music for Youth in Cincinnati) is a free orchestra program in the Price Hill area of Cincinnati, OH, where children take part in group and private lessons, sectionals, orchestra, musicianship and performances.

Both MusicWorks and MYCincinnati are inspired by El Sistema, Venezuela's revolutionary youth orchestra program that uses music as a vehicle for social change.

The joint concert is free and open to the public. For more information about the event visit www.ckyo.org or call (859) 254-0796.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING (continued from Page 1)

Dr. Tom Shelton, Fayette County Public Schools; Dr. Andy Henderson, Lexington Clinic; Rev. Joseph L. Owens, Shiloh Baptist Church; Daryl Smith, Kentucky Utilities; Malcolm Ratchford, Community Action Council; Art Crosby, Lexington Fair Housing Council; Rev. Adam Jones, Open Door Church; Janet Tucker, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth; Rachel Childress, Lexington Habitat for Humanity; Father John List, St. Peter Catholic Church; Claudia Blaylock, Central Kentucky Homeless & Housing Initiative; Ginny Ramsey, Catholic Action Center / Community Inn; Bill Embry, St. James Place Apartments.

Recent studies show more than 30,000 households in Lexington pay more than 30 percent of their gross income on rent & utilities. Even more so dire, just over 12,000 households pay more than 50 percent of their income on housing costs. These financial struggles are having real & damaging consequences for too many of our families.

I support the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund for Lexington. I'll focus more attention this spring in pushing for the needed legislative & administrative support at City Hall to pass & enact an AHTE Ordinance. When affordable housing is deserving elevated as a top priority for our city, I am certain the Urban County Council & the Mayor's office can find a way to responsibly finance the AHTE. I'll do my very best to help lead & press forward.



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NEWS & NOTES

- ◆ Congratulations to our 1st District neighborhood associations that were 2013 grant recipients of the Neighborhood Action Match Program:
 - Gratz Park Neighborhood Association \$7,000
 - Northside Neighborhood Association \$7,000
 - Radcliffe-Marlboro Neighborhood Association \$7,375
- ◆ Applications are now being accepted for the 2014 Sustainability Grants. The Department of Environment Quality and Public Works is providing grants, which are to be used by residents to work creatively to improve the environmental health of Lexington. Grants require a 100% match (materials, in-kind services or both); maximum amount of \$2,500 awarded. For more information and/or download application at www.lexingtonky.gov/greengrants. **Deadline is 4:30 pm, March 3, 2014.**
- ◆ Welcome, Lexington Police Commander Melissa Sedlaczek to her new role as head of Central Sector in the Bureau of Patrol. She is succeeding Commander Doug Pape, who is now in the Bureau of Administration.
- ◆ Welcome, Lexington Police Commander J. Gensheimer to his new role as head of West Sector in the Bureau of Patrol. He is succeeding Commander Gregg Jones, who is now in the Bureau of Investigations.

FIFTH THIRD'S *E-Bus* RETURNS TO LEXINGTON



In today's technically-advanced society, learning is no longer confined solely to traditional classroom buildings, with desks and chalkboards. Evidence of such innovation is the Financial Empowerment Mobile learning station, better known as the *Fifth Third E-Bus*.

Luckily, the E-Bus is scheduled to make 4 stops in Lexington during the week of February 10th. The E-Bus is equipped with 14 personal computers & satellite technology. Once aboard the E-Bus, visitors can find a wealth of information and resources on personal banking, financial literacy and homeownership. In addition to Fifth Third bankers, the E-Bus is traditionally staffed by representatives of local community-based & nonprofit organizations.

You can find the E-Bus at the locations listed below, 3 of which are located in the 1st District:

Tues, Feb 11 th	Community Action Council – Russell School 520 Toner Street	1:00-5:30 PM
Wed, Feb 12 th	Sullivan University 2355 Harrodsburg Road	10 AM – 4 PM
Thurs, Feb 13 th	Community Action Council – Winburn Center 1169 Winburn Drive	12 – 5 PM
Fri, Feb 14 th	Community Action Council – West End Center 913 Georgetown Street	9 AM – 1 PM

The E-Bus is free and open to the public. For more info, please contact Janet Beard at (859)455-5256 or Janet.Beard@53.com.